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DEPARTMENT FOR D, EAP, EAP/CM
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SUBJECT: DEPUTY SECRETARY STEINBERG'S SEPTEMBER 29, 2009
MEETING WITH PRC VICE PRESIDENT XI JINPING

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Aubrey Carlson. Reasons 1.4
(b/d).

11. (SBU) September 29, 2009; 4:45 pm; Great Hall of the
People; Beijing

12. (SBU) Participants:

U.S.

The Deputy Secretary

Amb. Jon M. Huntsman, Jr., Embassy Beijing

Joseph Donovan, EAP Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of
State

Rear Admiral Charles Leidig, Joint Chiefs of Staff

Amb. Joseph DeTrani, Mission Manager for North Korea, DNI

Amb. Sung Kim, Special Envoy for the Six-Party Talks

Derek Mitchell, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of
Defense

Pamela Park, Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary

Graham Mayer, Embassy Political Officer (notetaker)

James Brown, Interpreter

CHINA

Vice President Xi Jinping

Vice Foreign Minister He Yafei

Zheng Zeguang, Director General, MFA Department of North
American and Oceanian Affairs

Zhang Kunsheng, Director General, MFA Department of Protocol

Ding Xiaowen, Deputy Director General, MFA Department of
North American and Oceanian Affairs

Ma Jisheng Deputy Director General, MFA Public Affairs
Department

13. (S) SUMMARY: During a September 29 meeting with PRC Vice
President Xi Jinping, the Deputy Secretary said the upcoming
visit to China by President Obama would demonstrate U.S.
commitment to working with China to address global
challenges. VP Xi said China was pleased that U.S.-China
relations had maintained positive momentum during the
transition to a new Administration. This year of important
achievements in bilateral relations would culminate in the
visit by President Obama. The U.S. and China had coordinated
well on regional and global challenges, and China sought to
develop closer practical cooperation, including in the areas
of counterterrorism, nonproliferation and energy, Xi said.
However, discussions of strategic security issues had to be

conditioned on "strategic mutual trust." For China this meant respecting the core PRC interests related to sovereignty and territorial integrity, including Taiwan, Tibet and Xinjiang. The Deputy Secretary responded that the U.S. "one China" policy had served the U.S. very well across many Administrations and would continue to be a core principle of bilateral relations. He stressed the importance of dialogue, whether U.S.-China or cross-Strait. The U.S. supported positive cross-Strait developments. Dialogue was also the best option for addressing the Tibet issue. End Summary.

China Welcomes President Obama Visit

14. (S) Vice President Xi thanked the Deputy Secretary for his support for U.S.-China relations and noted that the November visit by President Obama would contribute to the growth of bilateral ties. VP Xi invited the Deputy Secretary to share his views on bilateral relations and preparations for the visit.

Positive Momentum in Bilateral Relations

15. (S) The Deputy Secretary extended, on behalf of the Secretary, congratulations to China on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the foundation of the PRC. He noted that this year was also the thirtieth anniversary of the normalization of ties between the U.S. and China and that the upcoming visit by President Obama would show how remarkable that relationship had become. Beginning with a telephone

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conversation with President Hu Jintao shortly after taking office, through meetings in London, New York and Pittsburgh, President Obama had demonstrated the importance he attached to U.S.-China relations. The Secretary's visit to China, as part of her first overseas trip after assuming office, also reflected the importance the U.S. attached to bilateral cooperation.

POTUS Visit Presents New Opportunities

16. (S) The Deputy Secretary noted that over the past thirty years the United States and China had realized many achievements. However the last eight months had been particularly significant, as both countries had demonstrated to the world the great potential inherent in our cooperation.

Both Presidents had made clear that in order to tackle big problems, such as climate change, we had to work together. Our Presidents also had cooperated in averting the dangers of an economic crisis that had threatened the well-being of all our citizens. During his visit to China, President Obama would further demonstrate our commitment to working with China to address global challenges and to showing the leadership necessary to help all the world's people meet their aspirations. The people of the world were looking to the U.S. and China for leadership. The agreements that we would reach and the warm relations that we would demonstrate during the visit would show that we were up to these challenges, the Deputy Secretary said.

Important Year for U.S.-China Relations

17. (S) Vice President Xi said this year had been a milestone in bilateral relations. He noted that he had attended an event commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations attended by President Carter and Henry Kissinger and that the U.S. participants had all agreed that U.S.-China ties were very important for both countries. This realization, VP Xi said, showed that the U.S. and China were not competitors but rather partners in cooperation. China was pleased that, through joint efforts,

U.S.-China relations had maintained positive momentum during the transition to a new Administration. VP Xi agreed that President Obama and President Hu, over the course of their exchanges, had reached "fresh, new common understandings." House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee Chairman Wu Bangguo had exchanged visits this year, further deepening exchanges between the legislatures. The inaugural round of the Strategic and Economic Dialogue and President Obama's appointment of Ambassador Huntsman also demonstrated the overall growth in bilateral ties, VP Xi said.

Common Interests Inform Cooperation

¶18. (S) China sought to build a solid foundation for closer ties through practical cooperation on a range of issues, including counterterrorism, nonproliferation, energy, and people-to-people and cultural exchanges, VP Xi continued. The international and regional situation was very complicated, and we faced an array of challenges to human society. Both countries had maintained good communication and coordination on regional hotspots including North Korea, Iran and South Asia, as well as on global challenges such as climate change and infectious disease. Our common interests were the basis for the expanded cooperation, which we should keep "up to date" and consistent with "changes in the times," Xi said.

¶19. (C) VP Xi said that the Chinese people, "including the man on the street," all had positive expectations for U.S.-China relations. During his visit to New York, President Hu had commented to President Obama that good bilateral relations were important not only for the peoples of the United States and China, but also for the peace, prosperity and stability of the Asia-Pacific region and the world. In this context, China looked forward to the visit of President Obama as a major event that would open a new page in U.S.-China

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relations. VP Xi said he was confident that preparatory efforts would make the visit a success. He added that he hoped the visit would be "magnificent."

China's Core Interests

¶10. (S) China hoped to maintain solid progress in practical cooperation, VP Xi said, including on strategic security issues. However, we would need to properly handle sensitive issues and cultivate "strategic mutual trust." Both countries had to respect each other's core interests and major concerns. For the 1.4 billion Chinese people, Xi said, this meant respecting China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, including Taiwan, Tibet and Xinjiang.

Taiwan, Tibet and Xinjiang

¶11. (S) The Taiwan question touched on all China's core interests, VP Xi said. China hoped the United States would abide by the three Joint Communiques, oppose Taiwan independence, not support Taiwan membership in international organizations that required statehood for membership, not sell weapons to Taiwan, refrain from upgrading U.S.-Taiwan ties, and support the peaceful development of cross-strait relations. China hoped the U.S. would understand and respect how the Chinese government handled Tibet-related issues, including the "March 2008 incident." China took very seriously the "solemn commitment" by President Obama on Tibet-related issues. Referring to riots in Xinjiang, Xi said the "July 5 incident" had been in essence a violent terrorist crime orchestrated and perpetrated by separatist, extremist and terrorist forces inside and outside of China. China hoped the U.S. would respect how the PRC government handled this situation. It was only when we handled

sensitive issues properly, with attention to core interests, that we could build the firm ground of mutual trust that would sustain future cooperation, Xi concluded.

One China Policy

¶12. (S) The Deputy Secretary responded that the U.S. was mindful of the overall importance of dialogue. This was true not only for bilateral relations with the PRC but also informed U.S. support for cross-Strait dialogue. The U.S. supported the recent positive cross-Strait developments and encouraged continued thinking on how to maintain this trend. The Deputy Secretary emphasized that the U.S. "one China" policy had served the U.S. well across many Administrations and would continue to be a core principle of bilateral relations. Dialogue was also the best option in the case of Tibet, the Deputy Secretary added, noting that the U.S. encouraged China to engage in dialogue with those speaking for Tibet.

¶13. (S) The U.S. and China would continue to have differences of views, the Deputy Secretary said, and the United States would continue to have opinions on how China could become a more open and dynamic system. However, trust and respect lay at the heart of good relations, and the U.S. appreciated how a focus on core interests could allow both countries to address challenges and solve disagreements. Under this framework, the U.S. and China would show the world that we could do even more together, the Deputy Secretary said.

People-to-People Ties

¶14. (S) The Deputy Secretary noted that he had been struck by VP Xi's comment on the positive views that the Chinese people had of the United States. People-to-people ties were as important as the work of senior officials and formed the core of positive relations. Both Vice President Xi and Ambassador Huntsman, as former governors, knew the importance of staying close to the people. The Deputy Secretary expressed hope that President Obama's visit would be an opportunity to connect the people of the two countries as well as our governments.

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¶15. (S) Xi replied that he fully agreed that we had to expand mutual trust and exchanges at the confluence of our common interests. We all remembered when, after decades of estrangement, renewed exchanges had allowed our peoples to begin to understand each other. Xi said this brought to mind his first visit to the U.S. in 1985 as a county-level official in Hebei Province when he had visited Iowa on an agriculture-related exchange. Xi said he had arrived with many questions and after visiting small towns and spending time with local families, he had departed with an objective understanding of the United States. Xi remarked that he had been surprised that the peoples of the U.S. and China shared so many common interests. He noted that, since 1985, he had visited the U.S. three times, twice as Fujian governor to the Fujian sister state of Oregon, and once to New Jersey in the capacity of governor of Zhejiang Province. Xi emphasized that local ties were the driver of bilateral relations and he therefore attached great importance to people-to-people exchanges.

¶16. (S) China hoped that continued dialogue would help the U.S. understand how China planned to develop itself, Xi continued. On the eve of its sixtieth anniversary, China was evaluating its progress and welcomed advice from friendly countries on the basis of mutual respect. In response to U.S. suggestions that China engage in dialogue on Tibet, Xi said, China was ready to talk to representatives of the Dalai Lama at any time as long as he abandoned the goal of Tibet independence or attempts to achieve independence through

"disguised means."

¶17. (S) The Deputy Secretary said he was pleased that Vice President Xi had been introduced to the U.S. in the living rooms of Iowa and expressed hope that Vice President Xi would have the opportunity to return to the United States. The Deputy Secretary noted that during the inaugural S&ED meeting, the Secretary and State Councilor Dai Bingguo had remarked that the responsibility of both governments to future generations should be the guiding principle of the discussions. As we looked forward to the visit of President Obama and future dialogues, this spirit should continue to inform bilateral ties in general, the Deputy Secretary concluded.

¶18. (U) Deputy Secretary Steinberg has cleared this message.
HUNTSMAN